

# Joyful Notes



## Reflections from the Pastor

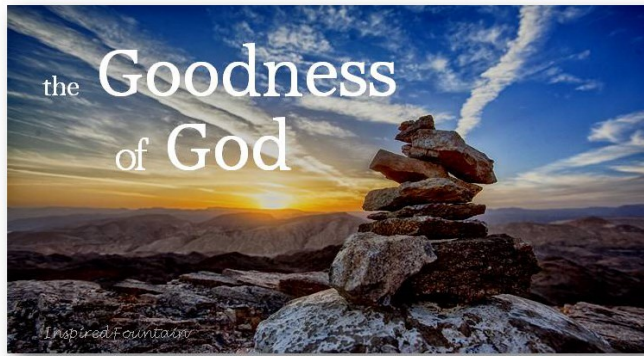
### The Goodness of God

*“I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; Be strong, and let your heart take courage; YES, wait for the LORD. he Lord.”*

(Psalm 27:13-14 / NASB 1977)

Yet the goodness described in the psalm not only speaks of David’s confidence in God, but his desperate need for deliverance from his enemies. In yet another dire situation, David can say to himself that he trusts in God, but sometimes his confidence wavers. Then when he feels threatened by people and circumstances that flood his mind and emotions with

We live in challenging times. In the minds and experiences of many people, the world may seem harsh, cruel, and even dangerous. News bytes from around the world or around the corner can be unsettling. It’s easy to feel anxious and afraid. What is not always so common are the examples of how God envisions goodness.



Goodness embodies random acts of kindness, and yet it also includes the spirit of being helpful and honest. In looking closer, one might say the spirit of true goodness defines the way one relates to the world around them. Those whose lives are examples of goodness are the kind of folks where grace, virtue, honor, and integrity are the principles for everyday life.

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fear and doubt, the idea of waiting on God doesn’t feel like an option.

Depending on his circumstances, David may wonder if God even cares at times when he feels like he’s had enough. This is a recurring pattern with David. He can express his faith in God one minute and the very next minute question whether God is there at all. Yet it seems that when he reaches the moment he’s ready to give up, that’s when David remembers. With a renewed sense of strength and courage he writes

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Join us for  
 Sunday  
 Worship  
 at 11:30 am  
 in person  
 and via  
 Zoom!

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in the closing verses of this psalm, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

Although David waits on God, he also remembers he cannot face the waiting on his own, especially when the pressure of his circumstances feels like more than he can handle. It is seeing the goodness of God that gives him the restored confidence to believe that God is there with him and will see him through to the end. When the psalmist is desperate and needs God's help, he believes that somehow, the goodness of God will be just the thing he needs. Sometimes it was just the memory of how God had been there for him so often in his life that helped him to hold on.

When he remembered the faithfulness of God, and the strength and courage he received in the face of desperate times, he was able to reclaim the

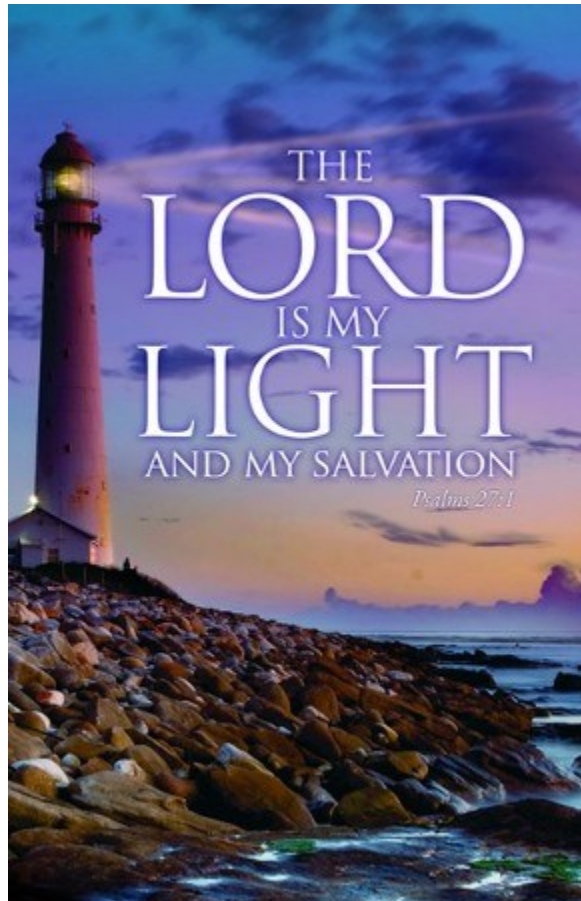
confidence he expressed at the beginning of Psalm 27 where he writes, "the Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Maybe we can identify with David. We express a strong faith in God and may still cry out when we are facing situations that push us to the limits of what we think we can handle. So then, we offer up our own desperate prayers. We know the answers do not always come quickly, but we wonder how long must we wait before the answers come to us? Perhaps, like David, we can remember previous times in our lives when we were aware of God's

presence with us, and we experienced God's goodness. So that, like David, this can help us in the waiting.

It's this same powerful loving and

gentle presence of God in us that imparts strength and courage, even when we are about to give up. When you have the most on your mind, look for God's goodness all around you. Maybe it's in the beauty of the morning, through an unexpected kindness shown to you, in the face of a child, or the smile of a passing stranger. You may find it in the opportunity to help another or to receive help. The evidence of God's goodness is everywhere if we open our eyes to see it. When you are at the end of your proverbial rope, look for God's goodness in the "land of the living," gaining strength and courage for the journey ahead. So, my dear family, keep your eyes open. "Be strong, and let your heart take courage; YES, wait for the LORD."



*Blessings-  
Pastor Michael*

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## The Silence

Poet: Edgar Nye

When the burdens of life get too heavy and what should be sweet seems as gall,  
I go on a soul-cleansing journey that shows me the need of it all.

Away from Life's troubled pathway, through the valley and up the hill,  
To the peak of a lofty summit where the pulse of the world stands still;

There I see God's love all about me in the wonderful things He has made,  
And peacefully return from the Silence to take up my life unafraid.







## JULY BIRTHDAYS

JULY 6 - JOSH McCONNELL

JULY 8 - KATIE PATTERSON



But those who  
**WAIT** FOR  
 THE  
**LORD**

WILL RENEW THEIR  
**STRENGTH**

They will  
 mount up  
 with **WINGS** like  
**Eagles**  
 THEY WILL RUN AND

**NOT Be Weary**  
 They will walk and  
**NOT FAINT** ISAIAH 40:31

## O Love Divine

Poet: Clara McAlister Brooks

O love divine! no soul has e'er  
 Thy wondrous depths explored;  
 O priceless gift! we fain would have  
 Thy riches on us poured.  
 Let mortals join with all their might,  
 Let earth and heaven both unite  
 To sing- thy praise by day and night;  
 The half can ne'er be told.

O love divine, what treasures yet  
 Within thy coffers lie!  
 The gold and silver of the earth  
 Would not thy riches buy.  
 E'en though the sands upon the shore  
 Of every sea should turn to ore  
 Of choicest metal, 'twere no more  
 Than naught compared to thee.

O love divine, in thee our souls  
 Eternal pleasures find,  
 Surpassing all that earth could give,  
 Were all its powers combined.  
 Thy music sweet we love to sing,  
 Our spirits ever to thee would cling;  
 An offering now of praise we bring  
 In humble sacrifice.

O love divine, 'tis wonderful  
 That mortals here below  
 May share thy grace most excellent,  
 Thy wondrous power know!  
 Around our hearts forever entwine,  
 And let thy beauties in us shine,  
 That we may be, O love divine,  
 Completely lost in thee.

## WINGS OF LOVE

The priceless gift of life is love,  
 For with the help of God above  
 Love can change the human race  
 And make this world a better place ...  
 For love dissolves all hate and fear  
 And makes our vision bright and clear  
 So we can see and rise above  
 Our pettiness on wings of love.

- Helen Steiner Rice



Astoria First United  
Methodist Church  
1076 Franklin Avenue  
Astoria, OR 97103

Request Service Requested

**We are open for worship services each Sunday at 11:30 am in person and on Zoom.**

**As Pastor Michael is available to respond to pastoral care needs by phone 541-499-9703 or in person.**

**Bishop:** *Rev. Elaine Stanovsky*

**District Superintendent:** *Rev. Wendy Woodworth*

**Pastor:** *Rev. Michael Avila*

**Administrative Assistant:** *Lynette Vollmer*

**Astoria Lay Leaders:** *Chuck Albright & Sue Hicks*

**Finance Chairperson:** *Sue Hicks*

**Lay Member to Annual Conference:** *Mary Frances Gunn*

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